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花とゆめCOMICS

# てるてる×少年

高尾 滋 8

てるてる×少年〔8〕

高尾 滋

白泉社

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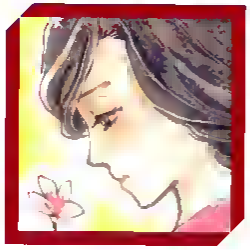
花とゆめCOMICS

▶収録作品◀

紫信の本当の父親は正吾だった!? 正吾にそう信じてると告げられた松子は過労で倒れる。紫信は才蔵らと共に田の見舞いに駆けつけるが、里では不穏な空気が渦巻いていた!! 待ち伏せる反側城組織。そして衝撃の展開が !?

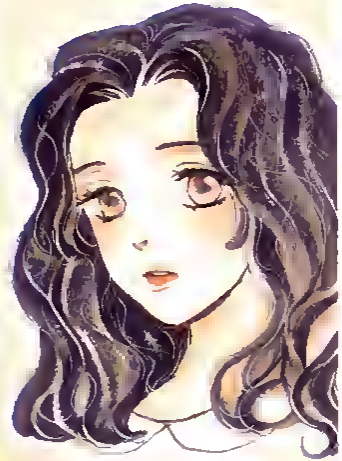
■花とゆめ掲載■

白泉社



## 作品かいせつ

紫信の本当の父親は正吾だった…!? 正吾にそう信じてると告げられた松子は過労で倒れ、吐血してしまう。その血に過敏に反応し、何かを思い出す才蔵。一方、紫信は母の見舞いに駆けつけるが、里では不穏な空気が渦巻いていた!! 遂に姿を現した反御城組織の正体とは…?




●高尾 滋の本
――花とゆめコミックス――
人形芝居 ①～②
スロップマンションにお帰り ディア マイン 全4巻
てるてる×少年 ①～⑧

Hana to Yume COMICS

# Teru Teru X Shounen

Volume 8

Takao Shigeru

# Chapter 43

ARH
UGH
..
AH
ARGH
!!!

GRAB
YOSHITO ! GET A DOCTOR !!
YOSHITO, GET SAIZOU ...
GET HIM OUT OF THE HOSPITAL !
HE-...
HE IS ACTING UP BECAUSE OF THE BLOOD ...
W-WAIT ...
!

FWUMP
SWOOSH
LET ME RETURN TO THE HOTEL TO REST
MY AND SAIZOU TOO
ALSO, DON'T LET SHINOBU KNOW ABOUT THIS
AS YOU WISH
SHOU-
IT'LL BE ALRIGHT

DONT WORRY
SHINO WENT TO GET THE DOCTORS AWHILE AGO
GASP
NO ...
I DONT WANT AN EXAMINATION ...
HAA
CONTACT THE OSHIRO FAMILY PHYSICIAN ...
I WANT TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY
GASP
PLEASE

HOW IS YOUR MOTHER'S CONDITION ?
SHINO -HIME !
YOU GUYS ! WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT THE HOSPITAL ?
WE ASKED MISHIMA-KUN TO BRING US HERE ...
THANK YOU GUYS FOR WORRYING ABOUT ME ...
THEY SAID IT WAS DUE TO EXHAUSTION
SHE WILL BE GOING FOR A DETAILED EXAMINATION TOMORROW SO I MAY BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR AWHILE NOW ...
HOPEFULLY IT ISN'T SOMETHING SERIOUS
THANKS
SORRY FOR SHOWING UP HERE ALL OF A SUDDEN,
I THOUGHT I COULD JUST MAKE A PHONE CALL TO CHECK ON YOU BUT ...
I WANTED TO SEE YOU FACE TO FACE AFTER ALL ...

ARE YOU ALRIGHT ?
I KNEW I WOULDNT BE ABLE TO REST ASSURED BY JUST HEARING YOUR VOICE
.....
WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN AND WEAK
YOU CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON ME OKAY ?

WHAT'S WRONG ?
YOU SAID YOU'D FEEL BETTER AFTER SEEING THE PRINCESS'S FACE
HER SMILE
LOOKED SO RESIGNED
I ALWAYS KNEW THAT SHE WAS HARDLY ONE TO SHOW HER WEAK SIDE IN FRONT OF OTHERS
IT'S AS IF SHE IS AT A POINT WHERE SMILING IS ALL THAT'S LEFT FOR HER TO DO
IT'LL BE ALRIGHT IF SHE HAS SOMEONE WHO CAN MAKE HER SMILE FROM THE BOTTOM OF HER HEART
OF COURSE IM WORRIED FOR HER BUT,
THERE'S ALWAYS OKU-KUN
SAIZOU ?
YUP
I JUST FEEL THAT

STARTLE
CHK
SHOU-NIISAMA
SHUT
WHERE IS THE DOCTOR ?
THEY ALL SEEMED TO BE BUSY AT THE MOMENT
BUT I MANAGED TO AT LEAST TELL THEM THAT MOTHER HAS REGAINED HER CONSCIOUSNESS
I SEE
IS IT TRUE THAT SASUKE IS HERE TOO ?
YES
CAN THE TWO OF YOU GO ON HOME FIRST ?

I'LL GO HOME AFTER THE DOCTORS ARRIVE SO I CAN LET THEM KNOW TO CANCEL THE EXAMINATION TOMORROW AND DISCHARGE HER
EHH !?
HER MAJESTY REQUESTED THAT WE TAKE HER TO THE OSHIRO FAMILY PHYSICIAN
WELL IF YOU CONSIDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THAT MAY BE THE BEST OPTION AFTER ALL
I'LL ASK YOSHITO TO GO AHEAD OF US TO MAKE PREPARATIONS
I WAS THINKING WE SHOULD COME SEE SHOUKO-SAN OFF TOMORROW MORNING
CAN I LEAVE THAT TO YOU ?
.....
SHOU -NIISAMA !
HM ?

WAIT FOR HIM ...
I UNDER-STAND
WHERE IS SAIZOU ?
HE'S LENDING YOSHITO A HAND
HE'LL BE HOME BY TONIGHT SO DONT YOU WORRY
IT'S COLD !!
YO ! I JUST GOT A CALL FROM THE LORD ...
HE SAID HE IS DROPPING BY THE SCHOOL BEFORE COMING HOME ...
HEY LETS GO BACK INSIDE OKAY
IM FINE YOU CAN HEAD INSIDE FIRST
ARE YOU WAITING FOR SAIZOU ..?

THE SIGHT OF IT IS BURNED INTO MY EYES
HE SAT NEXT TO MOTHER LIKE IT WAS THE MOST NATURAL THING IN THE WORLD
THAT UNSPEAKABLE SPECTACLE WAS SOMEWHAT HEARTWARMING
MORE NATURAL THAN ANYTHING,
MORE AMAZING THAN ANYTHING,
SAIZOU
...

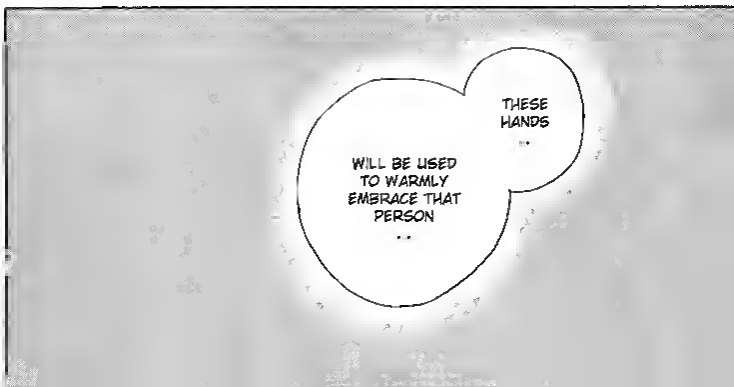
SAIZOU
...
WHAT'S WRONG SAIZOU ?
AHH UHM ...
I FEEL LIKE SOMEONE JUST CALLED MY NAME ...
COME ON LETS GO HOME ALREADY
THE SUN IS SETTING ! LOOK AT THAT, THE SKY IS BLOOD RED IN COLOR ...
BLOOD RED ?
WAS IT THIS COLOR ?
NO, BLOOD IS ...
EVEN MORE ...
YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER TO SCORE A BLOW TOMORROW ...

EVEN MORE FRIGHTENING ...
THIS WONT COUNT AS ANY TRAINING IF YOU KEEP SAYING YOU'RE SCARED TO FIGHT ...!
I CANT HELP IT IF IM SCARED ...
GROTESQUE
WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU SCARED OF ?
BOTH OF THEM !
EVEN NOW ??
YUP ! EVEN NOW ...
TO HURT PEOPLE WITH YOUR OWN STRENGTH
OR IS IT GETTING HURT BY SOMEONE ELSE

SO I HEARD THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE SHINOBU -SAMA'S BODYGUARD ?
AFTER GOING THROUGH INTENSE TRAINING TO SUPPRESS THAT FEAR OF YOURS ....
AND THAT STRENGTH YOU'VE OBTAINED IS ALL FOR THE SAKE OF THE PRINCESS HUH ?
DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU WANT TO SAY ?
HMM
LET ME PREDICT SOMETHING FOR YOU .....
AFTER REUNITING WITH THE PRINCESS,
YOU ARE GOING TO REALISE A LOT OF THINGS

THE STRENGTH YOU POSSESS IS THAT OF A KILLER ...
METHODS TO KILL,
THE POWER TO KILL ...
WHAT WILL THOSE HANDS OF YOURS DO WITH THAT STRENGTH YOU POSSESS ...
.....
I KNOW OF A VERY SAD PERSON ...
THAT PERSON ..

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN WATCHING
SILENTLY REMAINS IN THE DEPTHS OF SORROW BUT HAS NEVER SHED A TEAR
AND SO I THOUGHT TO MYSELF


THESE HANDS ..
WILL BE USED TO WARMLY EMBRACE THAT PERSON ..

"THAT IS,
IF IT
CAN BE
FORGIVEN
..."

SAIZOU ...
ARE YOU ALRIGHT ?
HOW DO YOU FEEL ?
YOU'RE AWAKE ?
DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ?

I-
IM FINE
IM GOING HOME

HEY
HM ?
.....
DONT FALL ASLEEP
?
IM NOT SLEEPING !
UHM Y'KNOW
OUT WITH IT ALREADY !?

UHH
...

I'LL GO AHEAD AND WARM UP THE ROOM OKAY ?
AHH ...
"SOMEONE WHO CAN MAKE HER SMILE FROM THE BOTTOM OF HER HEART"
I SEE
HER FACE COMPLETELY CHANGES !

SAIZOU ..!
SHINOBU -SAMA ...

SHINOBU -SAMA ...
WELCOME BACK ...!
SHINOBU -SAMA ....
IS IT ALRIGHT IF I HUG YOU RIGHT NOW ?
YOU DONT HAVE TO ASK ME FOR EVERY LITTLE THING YOU KNOW
I DONT LIKE IT WHEN YOU DO THAT ....

I FEEL SO COMFORTABLE WHEN IM WITH HIM ...
"THESE HANDS WILL BE USED TO WARMLY EMBRACE THAT PERSON"
WARMLY EMBRACE ...
SAIZOU ?

"YOU ARE GOING TO REALISE A LOT OF THINGS"
"THAT IS, IF IT CAN BE FORGIVEN"

AND WHAT IF YOU CANNOT FORGIVE ..?

# Chapter 44

CLENCH
AHH
...

STARTLE
IT HURTS ..!
SAIZOU ?
IM SORRY ..!
IM SORRY !!
GRIP
...?
AH
I DONT WANT YOU TO BE SORRY TO ME

IM COMPLETELY FINE
SEE ?
IM ALRIGHT
HE'D PROBABLY BE STUMPED
IF I ASK HIM WHY HE IS APOLOGISING
HE IS SHAKING ...?
YOU'RE ACTING REALLY STRANGE !
WHAT HAPPENED ?
?
?
AH
WHERE ARE YOUR GLASSES ?

STARE
WHAT IN THE WORLD HAPPENED ?
PAT
PAT
WHAT ...?
.....?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN THERE IS NO NEED FOR ANY OF US TO COME ALONG
MOTHER !
THERE IS NO PROBLEM AT ALL
I CAN GET HOME SAFELY ALONE IF I CALL FOR A CAR TO SEND ME, SO KOUDA-SAN YOU TOO
OF COURSE THERE'S A PROBLEM ! YOU JUST COLLAPSED YESTERDAY !
I KNEW SHE WOULD SAY THAT
THAT'S WHY I ASKED YOU NOT TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL UNTIL WE CAME.
'SOMETHING LIKE THIS' !!?
ANYWAY, YOU NEED TO HURRY UP AND GET TO SCHOOL NOW
DONT LET SOMETHING LIKE THIS AFFECT YOUR STUDIES

AHH
.....
.....
PLEASE
JUST LISTEN TO WHAT I SAY
UH
AT LEAST !!
AT LEAST
BRING SHOU-NIISAMA ALONG WITH YOU
..
PLEASE ?

PLEASE, MOTHER ..!
OPENS
MOTHER ...
I'LL GO HOME ON THE WEEKENDS
SO UHM,
TAKE CARE
IF YOU THINK THAT IS WHAT I WISH FOR

IM DISGUSTED AT MYSELF
YEA
THAT MAKES TWO OF US

SO KOUDA -SENSEI ENDED UP ABSENT INSTEAD ?
ISN'T IT USUALLY THE OTHER WAY ROUND ?
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, IF YOU JUST WAIT UNTIL MONDAY ....
ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE RUSHED, YOU CAN GO HOME AND VISIT YOUR MOTHER RIGHT ?
POW
RIGHT AWAY ! JUST WAIT A LITTLE LONGER ..
YEA ...
HEY KENZOU, ARE YOU DONE WITH THE CLASS JOURNAL ?? THE SUBSTITUTE LECTURER IS CALLING FOR US !
THAT TEACHER IS ESPECIALLY FUSSY WHEN IT COMES TO PUNCTUALITY ...
WELL THEN, WE'LL SEE YOU AND OKU-KUN TOMORROW ...

.....
THUD
THUD
THUD
SHINOBU-SAMA ? WOULD YOU LIKE TO STOP BY SOMEWHERE ON THE WAY BACK HOME TODAY ?
WE CAN GO SHOPPING OR WE CAN GO GET SOME FOOD
IS THERE ANY PLACE YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO TO HAVE SOME FUN ?
AND WHY DO YOU ASK ?
HEHE
IT'S A DATE ...
GUESS ?

SHOCK
AH
PULLS
LETS GO, SHINOBU -SAMA !
IF WE HURRY WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE THE NEXT BUS
HUH ?
HUHH !?
WAI-
SAIZOU ??
WAIT
UNGH
I SAID WAIT A MINUTE ..!

THIS ISN'T THE USUAL BUS WE TAKE
HUFF
PUFF
UH ..
DO YOU HAVE ANY PLACE IN MIND YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO ?
IF YOU CAN'T THINK OF ONE, DO YOU MIND IF I DECIDE ?
WHY ARE WE GETTING OFF IN FRONT OF A PARK ?

BECAUSE NONE OF THE OTHER STUDENTS FROM SEITOKU GOT OFF AT THIS STOP
.....
THAT'S IT ?
.....
THIS PARK IS PRETTY WIDE
AND IT'S A REALLY NICE PLACE TO TAKE A RELAXING WALK
YOU CAME HERE ALONE ?
A FEW TIMES, YES
HOW COME YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS PLACE ?
MY JOB IS TO BE YOUR BODYGUARD
AND TO DO SO I HAD TO FIRST FAMILIARISE MYSELF WITH YOUR SURROUNDINGS

NOPE !
A FLORIST
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE ?
OH WELCOME !
STUDENTS HUH ? COME ON IN I'LL GIVE YOU A SPECIAL OFFER !
AWW WHAT A CUTE GIRLFRIEND YOU HAVE THERE !
RIGHT ?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH

THIS IS WEIRD !
THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING GOING ON WITH YOU TODAY !
WHAT DO YOU MEAN ?
WHY IS IT ONLY TODAY !?
I JUST DIDN'T DENY IT, THAT'S ALL
"IT'S RUDE TO EVEN THINK THAT A SERVANT LIKE ME COULD BE A SUITABLE PARTNER."
BUT YOU HAVE ALWAYS DENIED IT UP TILL TODAY !

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I LIKE TO SHOW OFF TOO ....
BECAUSE IF I DONT DENY IT IN FRONT OF OUR FRIENDS, THAT WOULD MEAN THAT I ADMIT TO IT
BUT IT SHOULD BE ALRIGHT TO PASS IT OFF IN FRONT OF STRANGERS RIGHT ?
EH ?
WELL EHM
SHOW WHAT ?
UHH WELL ..
WHO ELSE DO YOU THINK IM TALKING ABOUT
MEOW!

AH
A CAT
NOOO !
DONT YOU PITY LITTLE SHILO ? HE JUST GOT OUT FROM THE VET
COME NOW, PUT IT BACK IN THE CAGE !
MEEOW
LOOK AT THAT, SHILO IS TELLING YOU THAT IT HURTS
WHY ARE YOU SQUEEZING HIM SO TIGHTLY ..?
CUZ HE'S SO CUTE, THAT'S WHY ..!
I TOO

FEEL THE SAME WAY HE DOES
IT HURTS ...
YOU'RE SO CUTE ...
BUT I MAY HAVE LOOSENED MY GRIP A LITTLE

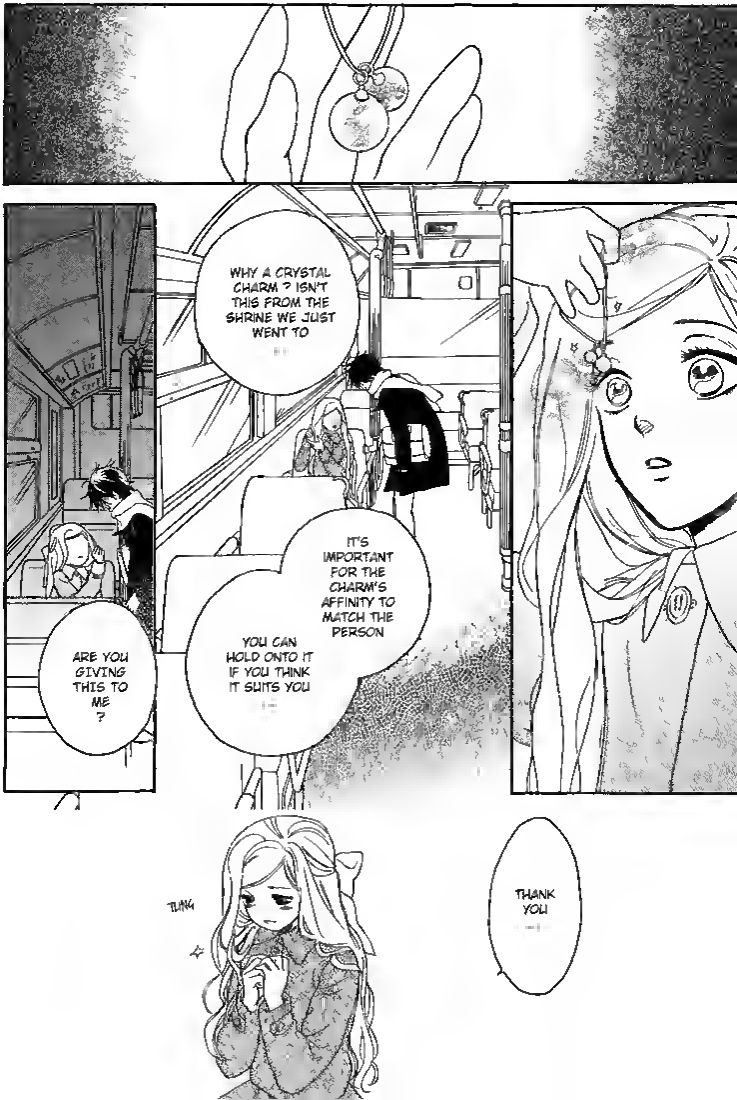
SO
CUTE
...

ONCE WE GO THROUGH THE PARK, WE'LL BE RIGHT NEXT TO A SHRINE
Please get rid of my father's illness!
Yuu
I hope I'll succeed in my job
Makoto
SHALL WE GO?

HM ?
OKAY !
HEY, SAIZOU
YES ?
DID YOU PLAN ON BRINGING ME HERE FROM THE VERY START ?
THANK YOU .
AWW THIS IS CUTE !
A CRYSTAL CHARM

BLUSH
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE REALLY CUTE
EXCUSE ME !
Please let us know when you've decided on your purchase !
AH UHM
AN EMA
PLEASE GIVE ME AN EMA ...
Note: Ema is a small wooden plaque where prayers or wishes are written and traditionally hung up at the shrine

CLACK
I WISH FOR MY MOTHER'S HEALTH TO RECOVER SOON

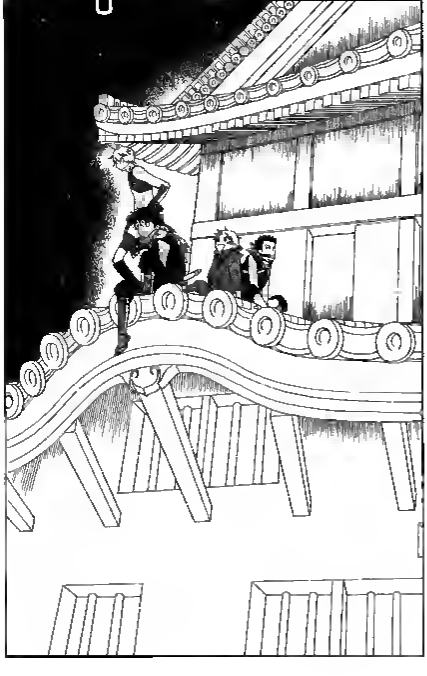

WHY A CRYSTAL CHARM ? ISN'T THIS FROM THE SHRINE WE JUST WENT TO
IT'S IMPORTANT FOR THE CHARM'S AFFINITY TO MATCH THE PERSON
YOU CAN HOLD ONTO IT IF YOU THINK IT SUITS YOU
ARE YOU GIVING THIS TO ME ?
THANK YOU
TUNN

I AM SURE
IT WILL BRING ME GOOD FORTUNE ...
WHAT ?
NO- NOTHING
I DIDNT THINK YOU WOULD LIKE IT SO MUCH

YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS ALWAYS SUFFERING ...
SHINOBU -SAMA
SHOUKO -SAMA
THAT'S WHY ...
IM GOING BACK TO THE OSHIRO MANSION ...
I'VE DECIDED ...
IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN DO ANYTHING BY WORRYING ABOUT MOTHER FROM AFAR ...
EVEN SO, YOU ARE SOMEONE WHO WOULD NEVER PRAY FOR YOURSELF ..
EVEN SO ...

SHE
COUGHED UP BLOOD
...

# Chapter 45



I HEAR THAT THE LADY OSHIRO HAS RETURNED TO THE VILLAGE
THAT YOUNG MASTER KOUDA SURE HAS A LOT OF SPARE TIME
SHE HAS COMPANY THOUGH
HEH
HEH
HEH
LOOKS LIKE
THIS CALLS FOR A SLIGHT CHANGE OF PLANS
THIS ISNT FUNNY AT ALL !
THE LADY IS GOING TO SHIT HERSELF IN
ALONG WITH THAT ESCORT OF HERS
IT SEEMS THAT THE LADY OSHIRO COLLAPSED WHILE SHE WAS IN TOKYO
ABOUT THAT,
SHE JUST WENT TO GET EXAMINED BY THE FAMILY HEAD DOCTOR
RESULTS SHOWED THAT IT WAS A MINOR ISSUE

MAIN MANSION BLUEPRINTS
RUSTLE
AND ...?
HOW ARE OUR INVESTIGATIONS PROCEEDING ...?
NO GOOD NEWS THERE ...
THE ONLY THING ADDED TO THE MAP SO FAR IS A SIMPLE ESCAPE ROUTE FROM INSIDE THE PREMISES ...
HMM ...
ONE SIMPLE ESCAPE ROUTE WILL HARDLY SUFFICE,
TRY HARDER !!
WHAT IS IT ?
.....

SPEAKING OF HINDRANCES ...
I HAVE NEWS THAT SHINOBU-SAMA AND HER COMPANY ARE HEADED THIS WAY AS WE SPEAK
OH WELL
LOOKS LIKE WE'LL JUST HAVE TO CAPTURE THEM ALL AT ONCE ...

I WAS INSTRUCTED BY SHOUKO -SAMA TO NOT LET ANYONE ENTER ...
LIKE I SAID ...
BAM
WHAT WAS THAT ..?
I CAME ALL THE WAY HERE BECAUSE I WAS SICK AND TIRED OF PEOPLE TELLING ME TO 'WAIT' !!
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE WORRIED
BUT ASIDE FROM THE HEAD DOCTOR AND HER FEW LADIES-IN -WAITING,
NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO ENTER HER ROOM,
I WILL BE GLAD TO RELAY YOUR MESSAGE TO HER, BUT AS FOR ALLOWING YOU TO MEET HER FACE TO FACE ...
AND DOES THAT ORDER GO FOR A DAUGHTER WHO CAME ALL THE WAY JUST TO SEE HER MOTHER TOO !?

I'LL LET HER KNOW
PLEASE FORGIVE ME
IM READY FOR THE CONSEQUE NCES
YOU TOLD HER, DIDN'T YOU ?
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU NOT TO LET SHINOBU-SAMA KNOW ABOUT SHOUKO-SAMA COUGHING UP BLOOD
BUT
I BELIEVE I ALREADY CALLED LAST NIGHT TO INFORM YOU THE RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATION ?
HEY HEY
ABOUT THE RESULTS
AND YOU GUYS JUST CAME WITHOUT KNOWING WHETHER OR NOT YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE HER ?
B- BUT DOES THAT MEAN THAT SHE WILL BE FINE FOR NOW ?
RIGHT ? AM I RIGHT ?
WELL I WASNT THE ONE WHO EXAMINED HER
THEY SAID IT WAS A STOMACH ULCER ...
IS THAT FOR REAL ?

ALTHOUGH THE RESULTS WERE A RELIEF,
IT PROBABLY WASN'T ENOUGHT FOR SHINOBU-SAN TO REST ASSURED ...
AND THAT'S WHY SHE WANTED TO COME HERE, TO BE BY HER MOTHER'S SIDE
SO,
IS IT REALLY TRUE ?
Yea
yea
EVEN I AM NOT ALLOWED TO SEE HER
I DONT KNOW MUCH MORE TO BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN ANYTHING TO YOU ...
NOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND, THE ONLY THING LEFT TO DO IS WAIT
I LEAVE OUR 'GUEST' IN YOUR HANDS
NO
WE INSISTED THAT THEY LET US FOLLOW THEM HERE !

WE GOT A CALL FROM OKU-KUN THIS MORNING,
SAYING THAT BOTH HIM AND SHINO -HIME WOULD BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL TODAY
AND HE SAID THAT THEY WERE GOING TO VISIT SHINOBU-SAN'S MOTHER BACK HOME //
WE THOUGHT SOMETHING SERIOUS HAPPENED BECAUSE SHE WAS JUST SAYING THAT SHE WOULD WAIT UNTIL THE WEEKENDS A FEW DAYS AGO AND WHEN WE VISITED THEIR HOME
"HARUMI ..."
THAT SHINO-HIME WAS SO FRAGILE ...
WE'RE VERY SORRY
WE KNOW THAT WE MIGHT BE A DISTURBANCE
I APOLOGISE FOR THE TROUBLE
THAT'S ODD,
SHINOBU -SAMA IS AN EXTREMELY STRONG WILLED PERSON
THAT'S RIGHT !

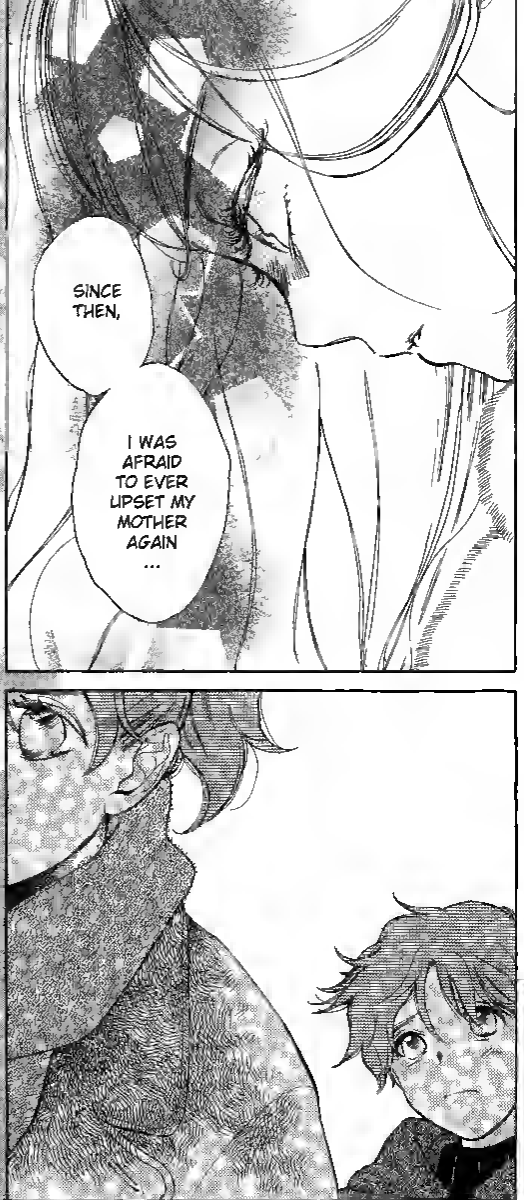
SHINO -HIME !
YOU'RE IN THE WRONG ROOM
WHAT !?
PRINCESS, YOU MUST NOT
INCLUDING THIS YOUNG MAN ??
PLEASE MAKE PREPARATIONS IN MY ROOM FOR THESE TWO TO STAY THE NIGHT
YOU THERE
YES !?
THAT IS NOT FOR YOU TO DECIDE ...
SHINO -HIME ...
.....
Why did Shino-hime get angry -?
SHE ISNT ANGRY, SHE IS STEELING HERSELF

I WASN'T ABLE TO SEE HER
YEA
MAYBE THERE IS ANOTHER REASON THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE HIM.
I MEAN, WHY ARE THEY SO RELUCTANT TO ALLOW VISITORS IF IT IS JUST A STOMACH ULCER
I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO WAIT UNTIL MOTHER IS WILLING TO SEE ME
IDIOT!!
WHACK
WHACK
WHACK
WHACK
NUMBSKULL
INSENSITIVE
WHY ARE YOU SO VULNERABLE WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR MOTHER
HOW SHOULD I SAY THIS
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT!
IT'S JUST ...
OUCH
OUCH

''MOTHER''
IT'S BECAUSE I NEVER WANT TO DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD UPSET MY MOTHER EVER AGAIN
EH ?
COME ON GUYS, FOLLOW ME !
IT'S REALLY DARK HERE THOUGH
UHH
IS THIS REALLY A PATHWAY ?
IT'S A SHORTCUT !
THERE IS ANOTHER HUGE WELL-LIT ROAD TO ENTER THE VILLAGE
AFTER WE GO THROUGH THIS PATH AND CROSS THE RIVERBED AHEAD, WE'LL REACH THE VILLAGE
THE MISHIMA HOUSE WHERE SAIZOU USED TO LIVE WILL BE NEARBY

"PRINCESS, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM USING THAT PATHWAY FOR AWHILE NOW"
"THERE ARE WASPS WHO HAVE TAKEN UP NEST IN THAT AREA"
BUT SAIZOU WAS SOON DOWN WITH THE MUMPS
AND I WANTED TO VISIT HIM BADLY
"PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU USE THE LARGE MAIN ROAD TO ENTER THE VILLAGE NEXT TIME"
I LOVED USING THIS SHORTCUT WHEN I WAS A KID
IT WAS ALWAYS PITCH DARK
IT FELT LIKE I WAS ON A THRILLING ADVENTURE
I ALWAYS USE THIS PATHWAY WHEN I PLAYED WITH SAIZOU
BUT ONE DAY
I STARTED OUT USING THE MAIN ROAD TO THE ENTRANCE BUT EVENTUALLY RAN OUT OF TIME
BUT I SNEAKED OUT BECAUSE I WANTED TO VISIT HIM ON THAT DAY NO MATTER WHAT
I RECALL HAVING AN IMPORTANT GUEST OVER THAT DAY,
BUT OF COURSE, I WAS STOPPED HALFWAY
SO YOU USED THE SHORTCUT INSTEAD ?

I REMEMBER IT TO THIS DAY...
I SAW THE ENORMOUS NEST AND AN ARMY OF WASPS...
THE SOUND OF THEIR WINGS FLICKERING AND THE FIERCE BUZZING RANG THROUGH MY EARS...
UWAAA
RUSTLE


SINCE THEN,
I WAS AFRAID TO EVER UPSET MY MOTHER AGAIN ...
JUST THAT ONE TIME ...

JUST ONCE
SHE HELD TIGHTLY ONTO MY HANDS ...
I love your story ...
ROKUTA !?
I LIKED IT TOO !
IT'S KIND OF CUTE !
HUH WHAAT ..!?
I CAME TO VISIT
RUSTLE
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ?
UHM
THIS KID IS FROM THE VILLAGE ...
NEVERMIND THAT. WHAT ARE YOU GUYS-

ME TOO ...
WHAT'S WITH YOU GUYS ..
REMEMBER WHEN YOU SAID YOU "HAD TO SEE HIM ON THAT DAY NO MATTER WHAT"
I THINK THE SAME GOES FOR MEETING WITH YOUR MOTHER NOW .
IM SURE THERE MUST BE A WAY FOR YOU TO MEET WITH HER ?

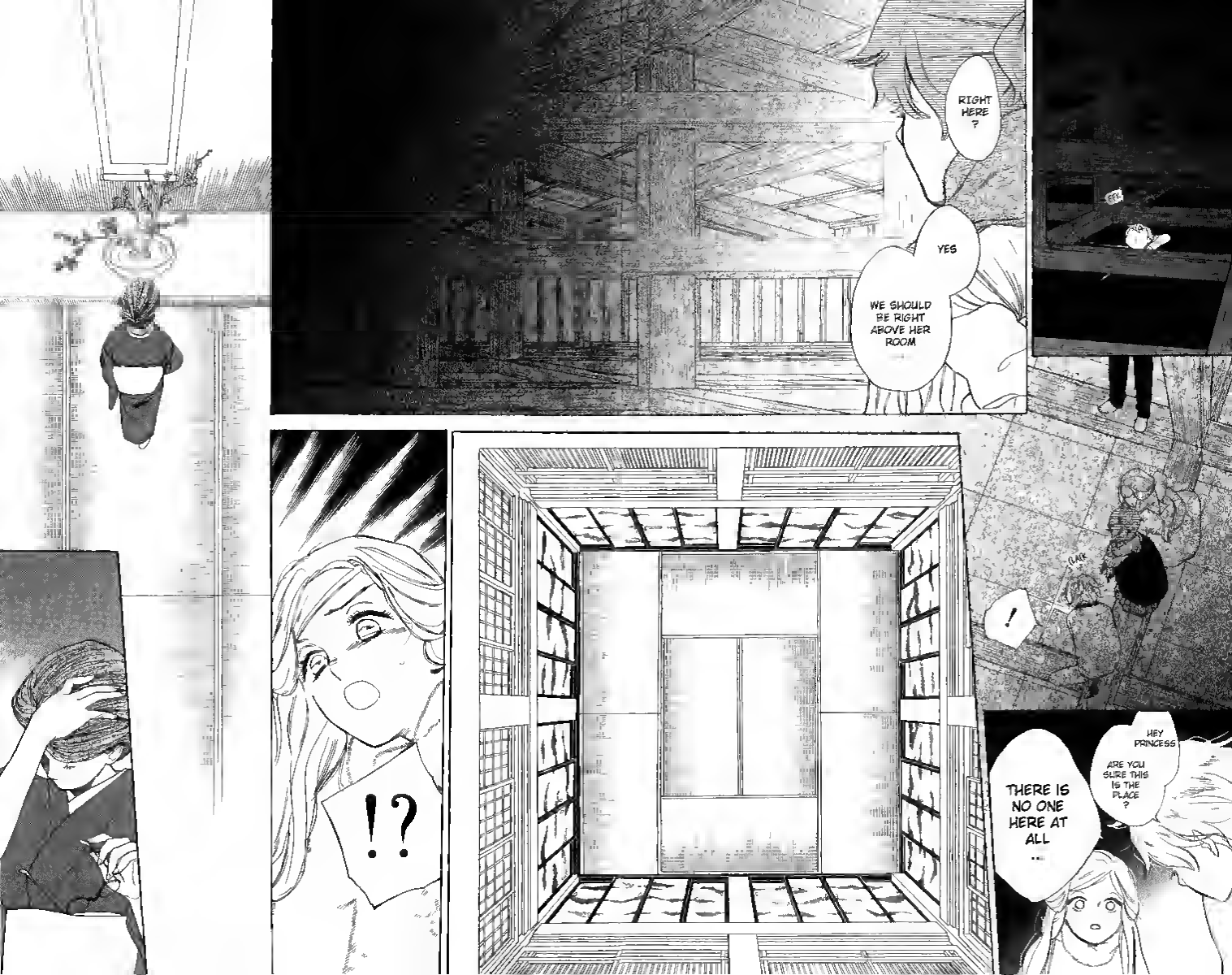
SHINOBU -SAMA !!?
HUH
UHM
SHINOBU -SAMA !?
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
SHINOBU -SAMA !
I HAVE PREPARED THE ROOM FOR YOUR GUESTS TONIGHT
YOU CAN USE THIS SCREEN AT NIGHT
SMACK
SMOOCH

IT'S JUST A NORMAL PATHWAY THAT LEADS OUT OF THE MANSION
A 'NORMAL' HOUSE WOULDNT HAVE SUCH THING AS A HIDDEN PASSAGE IN THE FIRST PLACE !
A HIDDEN PASSAGE !?
ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY TO LET NON-MEMBERS OF THE OSHIRO FAMILY IN HERE ?
DONT BE SILLY
YOU ARE ABOUT TO ENTER A HUGE MAZE
THESE PATHS ARE NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN GRASP SO EASILY JUST BY ENTERING ONCE OR TWICE
EVEN SO, YOU MUSNT SHINOBU -SAMA !
NOT WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE LADY OSHIRO !
MOTHER'S PERMISSION ?

I PROMISE IM JUST GOING TO WATCH HER FROM AFAR
BESIDES, IF SHE WERE ONE TO GIVE ME PERMISSION FOR THIS I PROBABLY WOULDNT HAVE TO GO THROUGH THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE
I AM DOING THIS PRECISELY BECAUSE I WANT TO MEET MOTHER
PLEASE UNDERSTAND ...

TURN LEFT AT THE FORK IN FRONT

I NEVER IMAGINED I WOULD END UP HAVING TO WAIT FOR HER PERMISSION LIKE THIS ...
I ALWAYS KNEW MOTHER WAS SOMEWHAT COLD TO ME BUT THIS ...
IT'S OKAY
THANK YOU ...
MOTHER'S ROOM IS NOT FAR FROM HERE ...
HEY SHINO -HIME ...
WAH
IT'S (UVING
SHUDDER
IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU GUYS THAT I HAVE TO COURAGE TO DO THIS ...
HOWEVER
SEEING THAT NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO VISIT HER ...
REMINDS ME OF WHEN FATHER DIED ...
IF ONLY I COULD SEE HER IN PERSON
I PROBABLY WOULDNT WORRY SO MUCH ...


RIGHT HERE ?
YES
WE SHOULD BE RIGHT ABOVE HER ROOM
ER-
!?
CLAP
!
HEY PRINCESS
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE PLACE ?
THERE IS NO ONE HERE AT ALL ...

WHAT'S GOING ON
DO YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG ROOM
WHOOSH
MAYBE WE SHOULD RETURN TO YOUR ROOM FOR THE TIME BEING
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE ...!
THERE IS SOMEONE HERE ...
WHAT !?
SHH !
I HEAR A VOICE ...
!
HOLD UP !

YO-
MMM!
AT ANY RATE, THIS PLACE IS REALLY HUGE
SO THIS PATH LEADS-
YES
THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEIR WAY AROUND THIS MAZE IS THE HEAD OF OSHIRO AND DIRECT MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY
THE ONLY INFORMATION PASSED ON THE NINJA CLAN HEADS IS A SIMPLE ESCAPE ROUTE
NO. THIS AREA IS FAR BEYOND THE ROUTE WE HAVE MAPPED
ALSO, THIS ROUTE WAS ONLY DISCOVERED RECENTLY,
THANKS TO THE FACT THAT A CERTAIN SOMEONE SHOWED US THE WAY IN

LOOK !
DESPITE KNOWING THAT HE WOULD BE IN VIOLATION OF ORDERS
WELL IT'S BECAUSE OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SHOUKO -SAMA, HE MUST HAVE FOUND THIS HIDDEN PASSAGE WHILE SECRETLY LOOKING FOR HER
KOUDA -SAMA HUH ?
THE FACT THAT IT SNAPPED
MUST MEAN THAT SOMEONE ELSE IS USING THESE PASSAGES
BEFORE I LEFT I SET UP A TRAP HERE
A FEW DAYS AGO I CAME ALL THE WAY HERE AND WAS FINISHING UP MY INVESTIGATIONS
THIS THREAD ...

SOMEONE BESIDES OUR GROUP...
OUT OF THE PEOPLE WHO COULD POSSIBLY KNOW THEIR WAY AROUND THIS MAZE...
SHINORI-SAMA WAS IN TOKYO JUST A FEW DAYS AGO...
SO IT CANNOT BE HER
AND THAT MEANS...?
IT MUST BE SHOUKO-SAMA WHO DISAPPEARED ALL OF A SUDDEN WHILE SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE RESTING IN HER ROOM...

EITHER THAT, OR SHOUGO -SAMA WHO DISAPPEARED ALONG WITH HER ....
OR ..
IT COULD POSSIBLY BE SOMEONE ELSE ..

.....
H-HEY,
WHAT THEY JUST SAID
SHINOBU -SAMA
LETS HEAD BACK FOR NOW
I DOUBT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO TALK CALMLY IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS
SAIZOU
WE HAVE TOO LITTLE INFORMATION AT THE MOMENT TO COME UP WITH A PLAN,
LET'S HURRY
BAM
EHH !!

SO WE'RE LOCKED IN ..!?
WHAT'S WRONG !?
TH-
THE EXIT WONT OPEN !!
THE DOOR TO SHINO -HIME S ROOM CLOSED ON IT'S OWN ...
!!!

# Chapter 46

BUT WHY !?
WE'RE LOCKED IN ....
WHY ....
!!!
I CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION FOR YOU ..

SO THAT WE CAN CAPTURE THE HEIR PRINCESS
...
HOW DO YOU DO, MY FAIR PRINCESS SHINOBU
YOUR WELCOME PARTY HAS JUST ARRIVED
AHH
YUUIRI ? YOU BASTARD !!!

AHHH
YOU'RE THAT PERVERT FROM BEFORE ..!
!!!
Abs
EHHHHH !!?
ALAS, SHINOBU -SAMA HAS GROWN INTO A MAGNIFICENT B&S !
ANY HOW, LET'S STOP MESSING AROUND SHALL WE ?
HEH

IF YOU COME WITH US OBEDIENTLY I PROMISE WE WON'T HURT A HAIR ON YOUR FRIEND'S SKIN
!!!
WHOOSH

CAPTURE
..
WERE YOU PART OF THE GROUP WHO ONCE ATTEMPTED TO KIDNAP ME BEFORE ?
SASUKE'S BROTHER AND I WERE ALWAYS COHORTS YOU SEE
IS THAT SO

CLAMP
I CANT ALLOW MYSELF TO BE CAPTURED BY THE LIKES OF YOU ....
RUN AWAY !!
DASH
ARGH!-
MOTHER
SHOU -NIISAMA WILL SURELY PROTECT HER
IT'LL BE OKAY

SHINO-HIME, DO WE PASS THROUGH YOUR MOTHER'S ROOM TO GET OUT?
NO
WE'RE GOING STRAIGHT OUT...
THESE PATHS ARE CONNECTED TO A HIDDEN ENTRANCE IN A SHRINE ON THE BACK MOUNTAINS...
RIGHT NOW...
ALL I CAN DO...
IS TRUST MOTHER TO SHOU-NII-SAMA...

YEA
.....
CLAP
CLAP

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, ROKUTA ?
IM PRAYING
SILENCE....
EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE KNOWS THAT,
I HEARD SHINOBU -SAMA IS BACK HERE ?
SHINO-SAMA'S MOTHER JUST COLLAPSED RECENTLY, SO IM HERE TO PRAY FOR HER
DAISUKE DID YOU KNOW !?
GASP
CLAP
CLAP
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO IS INDEBTED TO HER
WE'RE ALL INDEBTED TO SHINO -SAMA AFTER ALL
COME ON AND PRAY TOO !
I BUMPED INTO HER ON THE WAY HERE

YOU'RE GONNA GET PUNISHED FOR THIS
.....
CLIMB
I DONT HAVE ANY MONEY FOR OFFERINGS
I WONDER IF THAT'S BAD ?
IT'S JUST AN INNOCENT PRAYER FROM A KID,
I DONT THINK THE GODS WILL BE SO STINGY
I SEE
HM ?
WHAT'S WRONG ?
THERE'S A LIGHT AT THE BOTTOM
IT'S PROBABLY JUST SOME COINS
UMPH
EH
UWAA !!
GET DOWN HERE, ROKUTA !!

HEY
ISNT THAT BOARD SINKING IN ?
EH ?
OUCH
LOOK AT WHAT YOU DID
OH ?
CRRRACK
FWUMP

CREAK
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?
HERE GRAB ONTO ME !
TRY TO GET DOWN WITHOUT PUTTING WEIGHT ON IT
OOF !

IT'S A ROPE LADDER ...!
GRIP
ARE YOU SURE WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET OUT BY CLIMBING THIS LADDER ?
YES
WE CAN GET OUT FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE OFFERTORY BOX
ARE YOU OKAY ?

WE'VE ALREADY CLIMBED MORE THAN 20 METERS, JUST A BIT MORE
EEEEEK!!
STEP
!?
EHH ...

GRRR
CREAK
CREAK
Flinch
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK
WOOF
WOOF
SNAP

UWAAA
ARGHH
AHHH
!!!
WOBBLE
WAAA...!
UNGH
CLANK
FWOOP

GRAB
UGH ...
THUD
ZOOM
ZOOM
O- OUCH ...
THUNK

!!!
SMACK
OOF !
ARGH OUCH ...
FWOOSH
WHOMP
ACK
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

SHI-
WHAT ABOUT SHINO -HIME !?
PHEWIII
IT'S OKAY,
LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE IS FINE

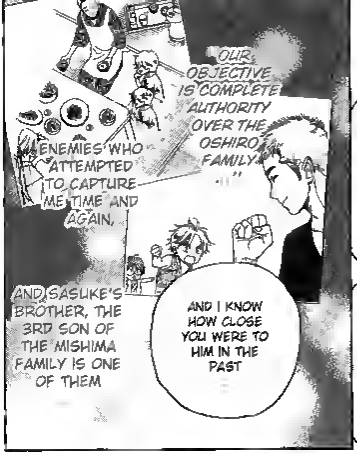
AH
AAHHHHHH
TH-
THAT WAS SUCH A SHOCK ...!
SQUEEZE
DONT COME DROPPING FROM ABOVE WITHOUT ANY WARNING LIKE THAT !?
IT WOULD BE TOO LATE BY THE TIME I WARN YOU
.....
THANK YOU

WHY DO YOU APOLOGISE ?
BECAUSE SHINO-HIME FELL DOWN THERE
IM SORRY
BESIDES, SHINOBU-SAMA WILL HATE ME FOREVER IF I DIDNT MANAGE TO SAVE YOU BACK THERE
THAT IS NOT YOUR FAULT, MIYOSHI--SAN
MORE IMPORTANTLY, LETS CALL FOR HELP !
WE HAVE TO SAVE THEM
HE SAID TO WAIT HERE FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES
WHAT IS HE SAYING ?
PHEWITT

LOOK AT THIS ...
MM HE DOESNT HAVE ANY EXTERNAL INJURIES
HOW IS HE ?
DOESNT LOOK LIKE HE HIT HIS HEAD EITHER, SO HE S PROBABLY JUST EXHAUSTED
AND HIS PULSE IS NORMAL
THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE ENDS WERE CUT BY A KNIFE
CAN YOU TELL ?
THE END OF THE ROPE LADDER WE JUST CLIMBED
SO THE ENEMY IS FROM WITHIN HUH
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY FIND US NOW !
DAMMIT ! EVEN THIS EXIT WAS LAID WITH TRAPS

'THE ENEMY' HUH
EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF GUY IS YUURI ?
HE BELONGS TO THE MISHIMA HOUSEHOLD RIGHT ?
HM HOW SHOULD I EXPLAIN THIS ?
EVEN THOUGH HE IS FROM THE MISHIMA HOUSE, THERE IS DEFINITELY NO BLOOD TIES BETWEEN US
I DONT KNOW MUCH EITHER OTHER THAN THE FACT HE IS YOSHI-NII'S SUBORDINATE

DONT BE SILLY !
HEY ARE YOU SUSPECTING ME RIGHT NOW !?
"THE ENEMY IS FROM WITHIN"
HE-
IM SURE YOU MUST BE HURTING INSIDE TOO
WHAT ELSE IN THE WORLD DO YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE IN IF YOU AND SAIZOU TURNED OUT TO BE SPIES


OUR OBJECTIVE IS COMPLETE AUTHORITY OVER THE OSHIRO FAMILY."
ENEMIES WHO ATTEMPTED TO CAPTURE ME TIME AND AGAIN,
AND SASUKE'S BROTHER, THE 3RD SON OF THE MISHIMA FAMILY IS ONE OF THEM
AND I KNOW HOW CLOSE YOU WERE TO HIM IN THE PAST

AWHILE AGO, YUURI MENTIONED HE WAS COHORTS WITH YOUR BROTHER
HE IS TALKING ABOUT YOUR 3RD BROTHER, NOZOMI RIGHT ?
EH

YOU MUST BE IN SO MUCH PAIN

BUT I'VE NEVER PROPERLY TALKED TO YOU ABOUT THAT

IM REALLY SORRY ...

HUH ?
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO GROW UP TO BECOME
AN ALLY OF JUSTICE ...

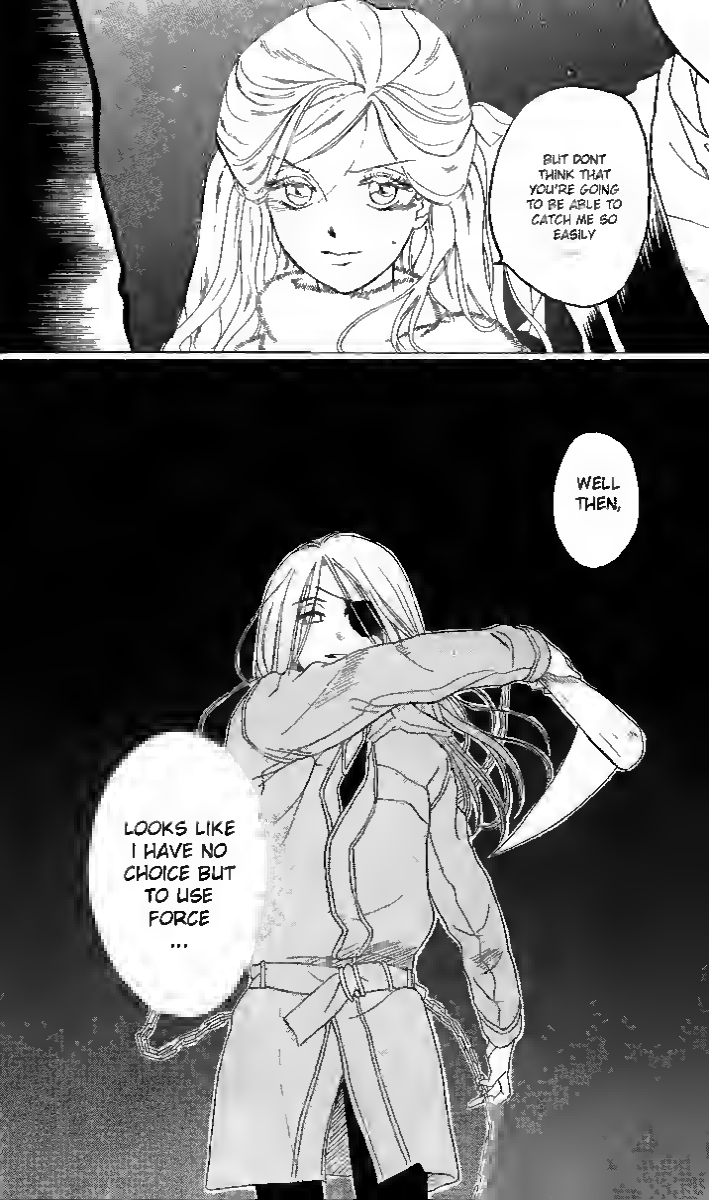
I DONT KNOW HOW TO SAY THIS, BUT DONT WORRY ABOUT ME !
*HENH!?
*HENH!?
SAIZOU IS BACK !
OH ...
HEY LITTLE GUY. YOU'RE AWAKE AREN'T YOU !?
HEY GET UP !
IT'S BEEN 30 MINUTES

LISTEN UP
SAIZOU IS PROBABLY COMING DOWN ON A ROPE OR LADDER, I WANT YOU GUYS TO USE THAT TO CLIMB TO SAFETY AS SOON AS HE COMES DOWN OKAY ?
KENZOU GOES FIRST, AND I WANT THE LITTLE GUY TO SUPPORT HIM FROM BEHIND
SASUKE
YEA I KNOW
WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THEY REACH THE TOP ?
DONT WORRY THERE S ANOTHER PERSON UP THERE WAITING
RUSTLE
THEY'RE COMING ..!
HOLD ON TIGHT, KENZOU

THEY'VE CAUGHT UP TO US !?
ZWOOSH
THUD
GO !

CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
GRIP
UWA !!
AH
ARGHH
THUNK
THUD
STOP !

YOU GUYS OKAY ?
HMPH
THEY'RE REALLY GOING ALL OUT FOR IT ...


BUT DONT THINK THAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO CATCH ME SO EASILY
WELL THEN,
LOOKS LIKE I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO USE FORCE ...

# Chapter 47

KA-CHING
CLINK

SHOVE
!!
THUD
SLIDE
THAT'S RIGHT. BEHIND THIS WALL IS ...

FWISH
IT IS HER MISFORTUNE TO HAVE BEEN BORN INTO THE OSHIRO FAMILY
I'LL HAVE YOU UNDERSTAND THAT !
TWANG
UGHH ...
THAT PERSON ..
GIVE IT UP ALREADY, SAIZOU ...!
THE ONLY THING YOU CAN DO IS CURSE YOUR FATE !
AND DROWN IN SORROW !
SHUT UP !
SAIZOU ..!

CLANK
CHIYO !!!
YOU GUYS REALLY ARE TROUBLESOME, YOU KNOW THAT ...?

TAKE THE PRINCESS AND RUN AWAY, SAIZOU !!
POW
WE'LL OPEN A PATH FOR YOU ...
SWISH
DASH

KA-CHING
CRRRING
DAMMIT ....

SLICE

!!!
WHOMP
.....
BAM
WHIRL
A HIDDEN DOOR ...

HAA
HAA
HAAH
HUFF
HAA
IM SORRY !
WHAT DID YOU ...?

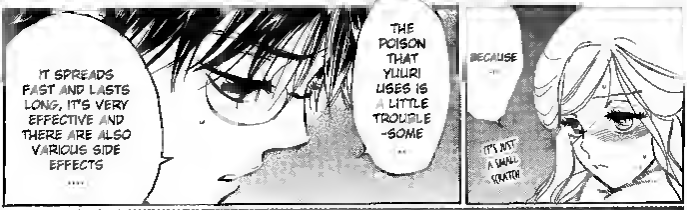
THIS DOOR CANT BE OPENED FROM THE OTHER SIDE AGAIN UNLESS WE DO IT FROM THIS SIDE FIRST
GO ON BACK, SAIZOU
I WOULD LIKE TO SEND THE MIYOSHI TWINS BACK HOME SAFELY FIRST IF POSSIBLE
IF WE ALL MANAGE TO ESCAPE SAFELY.
FORGIVE ME SAIZOU, BUT I TOO
CANNOT ALLOW THEM TO CAPTURE ME
GRIP
SO IF WE CANT ESCAPE ...
SHINOBU -SAMA
LIFT
I CANT DO THAT ...
SHOW ME THE WAY OUT !
JUMP
YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE THE BOTH OF THEM BEHIND !

NO ONE IS GOING TO LIKE THE IDEA OF ME LEAVING YOU HERE ALONE TO GO BACK AND FIGHT!
FINE THEN
AT LEAST LET ME WALK MYSELF
HEH I DONT HAVE THE TIME TO PLAY WITH YOU GUYS NOW
FWISH
.....
THERE'S BLOOD ON THE SCYTHE'S BLADE
WHAT ...?
BESIDES, I ALREADY COLLECTED MY REWARD FROM THIS FIGHT
VILLAINS ALWAYS DO AS THEY LIKE YOU KNOW,
DONT THINK THAT YOU CAN DO AS YOU LIKE !
YOU GOTTA FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED HERE !

THAT BLOOD BELONGS TO SHINO -HIME ...!
NOT TO WORRY, IT'S JUST A SMALL SCRATCH ....
BUT DID YOU KNOW ...?
THAT MY BLADES ARE SMEARED WITH NUMBING SUBSTANCE
I WONDER HOW FAR SHE CAN RUN ...?
GAR
GAR
RRRRAK

SHINOBU -SAMA !!?
I CANT FEEL-...
WOBBLE
I CANT MOVE MY BODY..!
SST

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT THIS SOONER ?
WHY ?
HMM ?
...SIGH


IT SPREADS FAST AND LASTS LONG, IT'S VERY EFFECTIVE AND THERE ARE ALSO VARIOUS SIDE EFFECTS .....
THE POISON THAT YUURI USES IS A LITTLE TROUBLE -SOME ...
BECAUSE ...
IT'S JUST A SMALL SCRATCH

SINCE HE INTENDS TO CAPTURE YOU, I DOUBT THAT THE DRUG IS LETHAL
HOW DO YOU FEEL ?
IM FINE ...!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME ...
!

UH
NGH

HAA
MY HEART CANT TAKE THIS —!
CLENCH
SQUEEZE

GYAA
IM AFRAID I CANT DO ANY PROPER TREATMENT IN A PLACE LIKE THIS
DOES IT HURT ?
IM SORRY ...
IM SO SORRY ...!
WHY ARE YOU CRYING ?
SHINOBU -SAMA ...

HAVE YOU EVER CONDEMNED THE FACT THAT YOU WERE BORN INTO THE OSHIRO FAMILY ?
EVER WONDER WHY YOU HAD TO GO THROUGH ALL THIS
HAVE YOU EVER HATED IT ...?
EVER THOUGHT OF RUNNING AWAY FROM EVERYTHING ...
OR EVEN CURSE THE OSHIRO FAMILY ..?
"THE ONLY THING YOU CAN DO IS CURSE ( YOUR FATE !"
ARE YOU WORRYING ABOUT WHAT YUURI SAID JUST NOW ?
SHINOTSU -SAMA ...

NO I HAVEN'T ...
MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY ...
BOTH YOU AND SHOU -NIISAMA ...
BEING BORN INTO THE OSHIRO FAMILY.
I ONLY THING I CURSE IS THE FACT THAT I HAVE MET SO MANY PRECIOUS PEOPLE IN MY LIFE ...
AND AS 'OSHIRO SHINORU' I MIGHT STAND TO LOSE ALL THESE PEOPLE DEAR TO ME ...

WHAT IS THIS
KEY ?
THROUGH MANY SECRET DOORWAYS
FAR AND DEEP INTO THESE HIDDEN PASSAGES
REMEMBER I TOLD YOU ONCE BEFORE
THE BIRTHMARK OF A LARGE FLOWER ON ONE'S BACK, PROOF OF THE OSHIRO FAMILY'S LINEAGE
THAT I AM IMPERSONATING THE TRUE HEIR OF THE OSHIRO FAMILY IN ORDER TO PROTECT HER
THE GIRL WITH THE FLOWER TATTOO ON HER BACK
I AM NOTHING BUT A 'SHIELD'
THE REAL MASTER OF THE OSHIRO FAMILY, HIDDEN

THIS IS THE KEY TO THE ROOM WHERE SHE IS HIDDEN AWAY
..
UHM
.....
I WAS THINKING THAT,
MAYBE
MOTHER COULD BE HIDING THERE
WHY DO YOU THINK THAT ?
I DONT KNOW,
JUST A GUT FEELING
IT IS THE SAFEST PLACE IN THE ENTIRE VILLAGE
.....
I WONDER,
IF MOTHER IS ALRIGHT ?
ALSO, I WONDER
IF SHE HAS IN FACT CONTRACTED A SERIOUS ILLNESS
...

.....
YOU
DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING THAT I DONT ..!?
NO ,,
NOTHING ABOUT SHOUKO -SAMA !
DO YOU BELIEVE THAT IT IS A BLESSING TO KNOW THE TRUTH ...?
SOME-
THING ...
NO ...
IM SORRY, I JUST RECALLED ...
SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST WHEN I WAS A CHILD ....
IN THE PAST ..?

IN THE PAST,
WHEN I WAS STILL A CHILD ...
SAIZOU ...?
I WAS FACED WITH A CRUEL, AND BRUTAL REALITY ...
EVEN I ...
AM AWARE
SO THIS
IS YOUR TRUMP CARD ?

SLUMP
UNGH ...!
WH ...
SHINOBU -SAMA !?
THE LAST RESORT ...
TO PROTECT YOURSELF ...
!!!
SHINOBU -SAMA ...
UGH ..
YUURI'S DRUG ?
DAMN
SHINOBU -SAMA !
.....
...?
WHAT
ARE YOU-
MY VISION ...
IS GETTING BLURRY ...

STEP
THAT'S ENOUGH ...
SHINOBU -SAMA
YOU'RE OUT OF TIME ...
I'LL HAVE YOU COME WITH US OBEDIENTLY THIS TIME ...
SHOCK
YUUKI ...
HE IS NOT ALONE ?
THERE'S ONE MORE PERSON ?
TWO ...
THREE PEOPLE ?
LOOKS LIKE SHE IS STARTING TO LOSE HER VISION
SHE REALLY IS STUBBORN. NORMALLY THE DRUG WOULD HAVE KNOCKED A PERSON OUT BY NOW ...

SHINOBU -SAMA,
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY FIGHT US ...
AND WITH THOSE INJURIES OF YOURS ...
YOU'RE OUT -NUMBERED ...
BUT TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH I DONT HAVE ANY INTENTION OF HURTING YOU ANY FURTHER, SAIZOU
IM SURE YOU WOULDNT MIND A FEW NEW INJURIES AS LONG AS I DONT KILL YOU ?
I DONT MIND EXCHANGING MOVES WITH YOU FOR AWHILE ...
BUT IF YOU INSIST ON GETTING HURT EVEN MORE THAN YOU ARE NOW,

WHAT ...?
DON'T SAY IT !!
AFTER ALL, YOU ARE
OH NO, I'VE BEEN WAITING TO ANNOUNCE THIS ALL ALONG
BUT YOU REALLY MADE IT SEEM LIKE EVERYTHING WAS CONVENIENTLY WIPED FROM YOUR MEMORY
MAYBE YOU WERE TRYING TO GAIN THE PRINCESS'S TRUST AS HER LOYAL SERVANT ?
SAIZOU ?
ISNT THAT RIGHT SAIZOU ? AFTER ALL, YOU ...

YOU BELONG ON OUR SIDE AS SHINOBU -SAMA'S ENEMY ...

SAIZOU
ooo

# Chapter 48

Shinobu -samaaaa ....
WHAT'S WRONG ? DID YOU WET YOUR PANTS ?
SAIZOU ?
PAT
OR DID YOU HAVE A NIGHTMARE ?

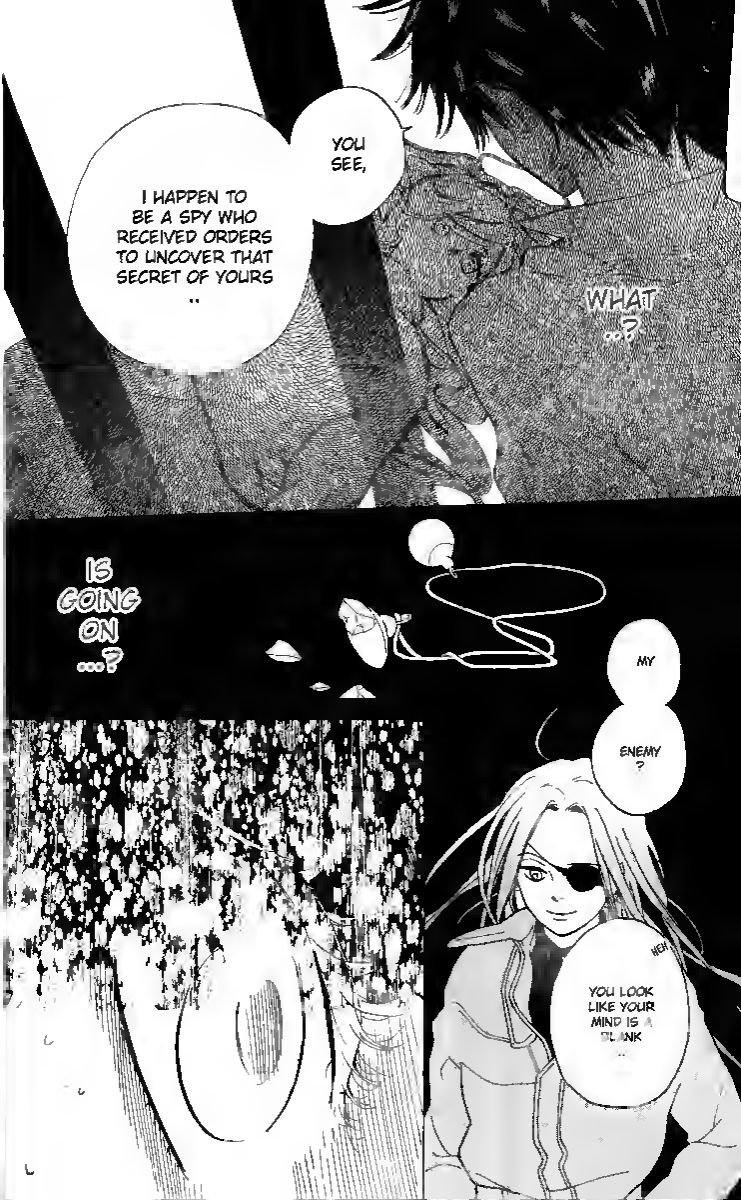
YOU DONT KNOW ?
SQUEEZE
I DONT KNOW ..
WHAT WAS ?
ALL RED ?
IT WAS ALL RED

"AFTER ALL, YOU BELONG ON OUR SIDE AS SHINOBU -SAMA'S ENEMY ...."

SAIZOU
...
IS MY ENEMY ?
MY ENEMY ..?
.....
OH MY
YOU'RE SMILING ?
YOU MUST THINK THAT THIS IS ALL A DREAM
TLING

CRUSH
MY PRECIOUS GIFT FROM SAIZOU ...
WHAT IS THAT ?
THAT'S THE CHARM
HAA
MY EYES ...
YOU SHOULD START TO FACE THE TRUTH SOON ...

IT LOOKS LIKE HER VISION IS GETTING BETTER.
YUUKI
YEA ?
HOW MUCH LONGER UNTIL THE ANESTHETIC WEARS OFF ?
THAT DEPENDS ON THE PERSON TOO
ABOUT 10 MORE MINUTES
SHOULD WE INCREASE IT ?
ONLY IF WE NEED TO
SHINOBU -SAMA ..
!!
THAT LITTLE SECRET YOU HAVE BEEN KEEPING SO CLOSE TO YOUR HEART
THE ONE THAT YOU CONFIDED IN ME AWHILE AGO


YOU SEE,
I HAPPEN TO BE A SPY WHO RECEIVED ORDERS TO UNCOVER THAT SECRET OF YOURS ..
WHAT ?
IS GOING ON ...?
MY
ENEMY ?
HEH
YOU LOOK LIKE YOUR MIND IS A BLANK ..

EHHH
?
YOU CAN HEAD OUT NOW, YUURI
WHAT ABOUT YOU ?
I'M GOING TOO,
I'LL GUARD THE ENTRANCE
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ?

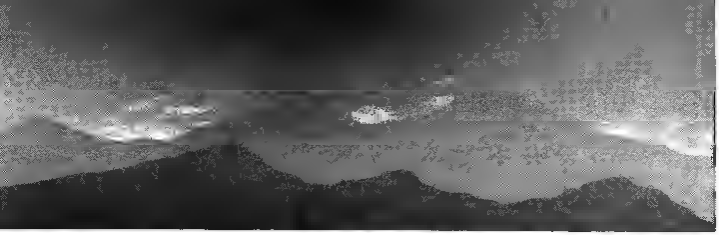
HUH ?
ISNT THAT PERSON COMING ...?
WE WERE GIVEN ORDERS TO CAPTURE SHINORI -DONO
SAIZOU ...
HALF A YEAR ....
WAS A REALLY LONG TIME, WASNT IT ?
AT THIS POINT, WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY ...?

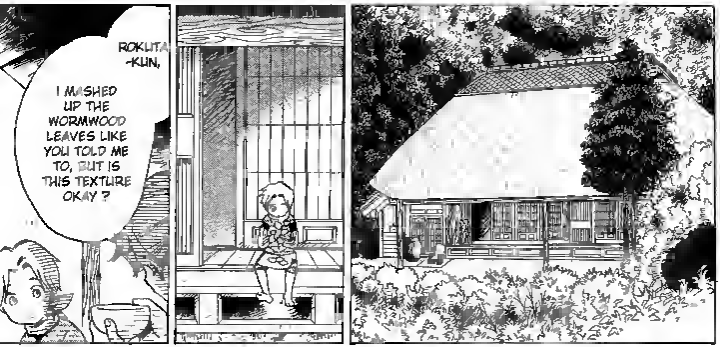
WHY ARE WE NOT SENDING A SEARCH PARTY THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND MAZE !?
SLAM
SHOUKO -SAMA HAS DISAPPEARED FROM WITHIN THE MANSION
THE PATROL MEMBERS HAVE YET TO CATCH SIGHT OF HER SO THERE IS A HIGH POSSIBILITY THAT SHE STILL REMAINS UNDERGROUND AT THIS MOMENT
SINCE SHOUKO-SAMA HAS DECIDED TO REMAIN HIDDEN UNDERGROUND TO PREVENT DISCORD AMONGST THE VILLAGERS, THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS INFILTRATE THE UNDERGROUND PASSAGES TO INVESTIGATE THE AREA
I ASK YOU, LOYAL SERVANTS OF THE OSHIRO FAMILY
I ASK OF YOU TO CONSIDER MY PROPOSAL IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

WE MUST CONSIDER THE FACT THAT SHOUKO-SAMA IS CURRENTLY WEAKENED DUE TO HER ILLNESS
BASED ON THAT
HOWEVER, YOSHITO
OUTSIDE THE ROOM WHERE SHOUKO-SAMA RESTS ARE HER LADIES-IN-WAITING, AND ON THE INSIDE THERE WAS THE YOUNG MASTER KOUDA WITH HER
THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF STRUGGLE ANYWHERE
SHE MUST HAVE A PLAN OF HER OWN SINCE SHE DISAPPEARED VOLUNTARILY
WE CANNOT SEND A SEARCH PARTY AFTER HER SO HASTILY IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY ORDERS
.....
VOLUNTARILY YOU SAY ?
WHERE WOULD SHE HAVE GONE DESPITE HER ILLNESS ?

WHAT IN THE WORLD COULD BE IN THOSE UNDERGROUND PASSAGES ...?
THIS JUST MEANS THERE ARE STILL OSHIRO TERRITORIES THAT EXISTS WHICH DO NOT WARRANT OUR INTRUSION ..

FWOOSH
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
YOUR ROLE, AS THE NINJA CLANS IS TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE FROM THE OUTSIDE
THE ROLE OF PROTECTING THE OSHIRO FAMILY ON THE INSIDE
FALLS UPON THE SHOULDERS OF US WHO HAVE SERVED THIS HOUSEHOLD FOR GENERATIONS PAST
TERRITORY WHICH DOES NOT WARRANT OUR INTRUSION ??
WHAT ARE THEY THINKING ?
PROTECT ?
THOSE LADIES ?
OR MAYBE ..
THOSE OLD GEEZERS ...




ROKUTA-KUN,
I MUSHED UP THE WORMWOOD LEAVES LIKE YOU TOLD ME TO, BUT IS THIS TEXTURE OKAY ?

THIS BIG SIS AND THE OTHER TWIN BROTHER SAID THEY COULDNT JUST SIT STILL WHILE WAITING FOR SHINO-SAMA AND THE REST,
SO I HAD THEM HELP OUT WITH THE PREPARATION OF MY MEDICINAL HERBS
FOR ALL YOU KNOW. THEY MAY COME BACK WITH ALL KINDS OF INJURIES
HERE'S YOUR DINNER
THE SUN IS SETTING
CUTS, BRUISES, FEVER AND POISON ANTIDOTES
ARE THESE ALL THE MEDICINE ?
HMM
THAT'S PRETTY GOOD !
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING ?
DAISUKE !

WHAT ?
DO YOU SEE SOMETHING ?
...
LETS PRAY THAT THEY COME BACK SAFELY
...
WHERE ?
I SAW THIS REALLY OLD BUILDING SO I THOUGHT I HAD IT RIGHT THE WHOLE TIME
...
REALLY ?
THE ANGLE.
YOU GOT IT THE WRONG WAY
...
I JUST FOUND IT LYING AROUND HERE !
I THOUGHT I COULD CHECK OUT THE SURROUNDINGS OF THE MANSION WITH THIS,
AHH
WELCOME BACK
THAT'S A TEMPLE
..

CHIYO -SAN ..!
MISHIMA -KUN
WHERE IS SHINO -HIME !?
SORRY
WE GOT SEPARATED
YOU LEFT HER BEHIND ???
NO
UHH SAIZOU IS WITH HER !
SINCE WE DONT KNOW OUR WAY AROUND THE MAZE, WE COULDNT PROCEED CARELESSLY IN SEARCH WITHOUT THE PRINCESS'S GUIDANCE
INSTEAD OF WASTING TIME IN A FUTILE EFFORT TO FIND THEM, WE THOUGHT WE'D COME BACK HERE TO THINK UP A PLAN
FOR EXAMPLE ?
SWEAK
OH
WE HAVE A GUEST

GYAAAA
R- RA RAAAAG !!!
AWERK
SAMPSON
OH MY
.....
CHIYO -NEE ?
.....
I KNOW WHERE THE PRINCESS IS NOW
WHAAAT !!?
SHE IS AN ANIMAL LISER !

YES
THE DIRT ON THE RAT'S BODY,
BASED ON THE PATTERNS ON THE LEAVES, I CAN DETERMINE THE LOCATION WHERE IT'S TREES GROW
THE STRING TIED AROUND IT'S BODY IS A SIGN THAT SHE HAS BEEN CAPTURED
FEEL LIKE BRINGING ME ALONG ?
IM SURE I CAN BE OF USE
ME TOO ...!
NO
YOU'RE STAYING HERE !
YOU STILL HAVE TO GUARD THESE TWO RIGHT ?
HERE
DI-
DID YOU SAY 'CAPTURED' ...?
LOOKS LIKE WE DIDN'T MAKE IT IN TIME
THE PRINCESS IS ALREADY IN THEIR HANDS

RATHER THAN WANDERING AROUND THE UNDERGROUND MAZE WITHOUT ANY CLUE,
THIS IS WAY MORE RATIONAL
FOR OUR RESCUE MISSION, THAT IS ...!
EHEH
DONT MAKE THAT FACE
BLUSH
SMACK
NOW THAT IT'S DECIDED
WHERE ARE WE HEADED ?

REMEMBER WHAT YOU GUYS WERE LOOKING AT JUST A MOMENT AGO ...?
WHAT A COINCIDENCE ...
IT'S THAT TEMPLE ...
EH ?

HAVEN.
WE HAVE ORDERS
STEP

IS SHINOBU -SAMA IN THERE ?
YES ...
AND ?
SO YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING OVER HER THE WHOLE TIME ALL BY YOURSELF ?
THE TIME HAS COME ...
THAT'S RIGHT.
IT'S TIME ...
OSHIRO SHOUKO WHO DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE ...
THE OSHIRO SERVANTS WHO REFUSE TO CONDUCT A SEARCH FOR HER ...
AND THE SECRET THAT LIES WITHIN THESE UNDERGROUND PASSAGES ...
SOMETHING IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN ...

ABOUT THE SECRET THAT YOU GOT OUT OF SHINOBU -SAMA,
I WILL HEAR ALL ABOUT IT IN TIME
...
AND I CANT VERY WELL LET YOU ESCAPE AT A CRUCIAL TIME LIKE THIS
...

YOU
...
DONT LOOK VERY SURPRISED AT ALL
...
SAIZOU
...
IS MY
...
ENEMY
?
.....

IM SORRY ...
IS THIS A DREAM ?

YOU STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT HUH ...?
WELL THEN, LET ME TELL YOU A STORY
12 YEARS AGO ...
THE LATE LEADER OF THE OSHIRO FAMILY ...
NOW YOU SHALL FIND OUT THE REASON WHY WE,
STOP ...
WHY SAIZOU ...
ARE ENEMIES OF THE OSHIRO FAMILY ...
THE INJUSTICE THAT HE BROUGHT UPON OUR PARENTS ...

WHAT KIND OF NIGHTMARE IS THIS ...?
STOP IT ...

YOUR BELOVED FATHER ...
RIGHT IN FRONT OF SAIZOU'S EYES WHEN HE WAS BUT A CHILD ...
HE MURDERED BOTH OUR PARENTS MERCILESSLY ...

YOUR BELOVED FATHER,
MURDERED BOTH OUR PARENTS MERCILESSLY, RIGHT IN FRONT OF SAIZOU'S EYES WHEN HE WAS BUT A CHILD ...
THOUGH IT WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF SPRING,
THE NIGHT AIR WAS WARM AND HUMID
I REMEMBER IT CLEARLY
I BELIEVE, THAT DOING SO IS ALSO A FORM OF LOYALTY ...
AS HAVE TO END THAT
AND